



USS *North Star*, CG, 1941

WPG-59



USS *North Star*, CG, 12 May 1943. She mounts a new radar and has newly issued life rafts installed as well. Note her Grumman J2F on her quarterdeck.

North Star: The star of the northern hemisphere toward which the axis of the earth very nearly points, and which accordingly seems almost stationary in the sky.

Builder: Berg Shipbuilding Company, Seattle, WA

Length: 225-feet

Beam: 41-feet maximum

Draft: 16-feet 6-inches (mean)

Displacement: 2,200 tons

Cost: ??

Commissioned: 1932, U.S. Department of Interior; 14 May 1941, U.S. Coast Guard

Decommissioned: 13 January 1944

Disposition: Transferred to U.S. Navy, 15 January 1944

Machinery: 1 x McIntosh Seymour diesel, 1,500 BHP; single propeller

Performance:

Maximum speed/endurance: 13.0 knots

Cruising speed/endurance: 11.0 knots, 9,000 mile range

Complement: 17 officers, 116 men

Electronics:

Detection Radar: SK

Sonar: ??

Aircraft: 1 x Grumman J2F

Armament:

1942: 2 x 3"/50 single mounts; 6x 20mm/80 (single); 2 depth charge tracks.

History:

The Coast Guard Cutter *North Star* was originally built as a wooden cruising cutter for the Department of the Interior at Seattle, Washington, in 1932. She was commissioned as a Coast Guard cutter on 15 May 1941 and steamed to the east coast, where she was placed on duty with the Navy.

She became part of the Northeast Greenland Patrol 1 July 1941. This patrol was formed against the violent background of the Battle of the Atlantic, during which the Royal Navy was valiantly attempting to guard the huge volume of shipping in the North Atlantic.

The Northeast Greenland Patrol, Comdr. Edward H. ("Iceberg") Smith, USCG, in command was organized at Boston and consisted of cutters *Northland* and *Bear*, in addition to *North Star*. The South Greenland Patrol, consisting of cutters *Modoc*, *Comanche*, and *Raritan*, together with ex-Coast and Geodetic Survey ship *Bowdoin* was consolidated with the Northeast Patrol by October 1941 and the whole was designated the Greenland Patrol.

The assignment of the Greenland Patrol consisted of "a little bit of everything--the Coast Guard is used to that." Thus convoy routes were kept open; ice was broken and leads were found through it for the Greenland convoys ; ships were escorted ; survivors of submarine attacks were rescued ; aids to navigation were constructed and maintained ; weather and ice conditions were reported; and air and surface patrols were maintained.

Additionally, the patrol craft were directed to seek out and destroy Nazi weather and radio stations, to conduct regional oceanographic surveys, to maintain communications, to supply settlements, and to perform rescue missions. "These duties," writes Morison, "the Coast Guard preformed with exemplary fortitude and faithfulness throughout the war."

A highlight of cutter *North Star's* work with the Greenland Patrol was the assistance she rendered in the 12 September 1941 seizure of the Norwegian trawler *Buskoe*, which was controlled by German interests for the purpose of servicing Nazi radio and weather stations in Greenland. The captured trawler and her crew and passengers were taken to Boston, Mass. for internment.

With the official declaration of war 8 December 1941, *North Star* remained on station with the Greenland Patrol. She was especially useful in providing services to east Greenland stations between 13 August and 23 September 1942. She was attacked by a Nazi reconnaissance plane north of Jan Mayen Island 23 July 1943. The plane withdrew from the engagement and trailed heavy black smoke as it disappeared over the horizon. *North Star* also investigated the German camp at Sabine Island, East Greenland 31 August.

Effective 15 December 1943, classification of *North Star* was changed to IX-148. She was officially transferred from the Coast Guard to the Navy, assigned to the First Naval District at Boston 13 January 1944, and placed in reduced commission. Next assigned to the Fourth Naval District, she departed Boston 3 May to assume new duties in connection with the care and preservation of inactive vessels.

She returned to the Thirteenth Naval District in February 1945 for temporary duty pending return to the Department of the Interior. *North Star* decommissioned at Seattle, Wash. 15 June and was turned over to the Department of the Interior 18 June. She was struck from the Navy List 11 July 1945.

Sources:

Cutter History File. USCG Historian's Office, USCG HQ, Washington, D.C.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Washington, DC: USGPO.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft of World War II.* Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982.

